

Monthly Update – August 2011

Tanzania Agriculture Productivity Program

NANE NANE FESTIVAL AWARDS USAID-TAPP FIRST PLACE FOR TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

Nane Nane (*Eight Eight*) is an agricultural and livestock exhibition and trade show held every August in major towns throughout Tanzania to celebrate the country's farming heritage. This year marks the second time USAID-TAPP has participated in both the Arusha and Morogoro regions' festivals, where program staff demonstrated best agricultural practices and were happy to report an increased number of visitors at USAID-TAPP's pavilions compared to last year.

The Tanzania Agriculture Society Organization (TASO), who helped facilitate the events, awarded USAID-TAPP's agronomists first place for their impressive and advanced technological demonstrations of various agronomic practices. Festival attendees learned about numerous farming methods, such as drip irrigation, proper plant spacing, pest and disease control, land preparation, and how to establish kitchen gardens. Arusha Regional Commissioner Mr. Isdory Shirima praised the drip irrigation technology demonstrated by USAID-TAPP, commenting that it will simplify irrigation efforts, conserve water and lead to improved crop production and increased income for farmers across Tanzania.

LAUNCH OF MKULIMA MBUNIFU MAGAZINE

The first issue of a Swahili language monthly newsletter on Tanzanian agriculture, named *Mkulima Mbunifi* (*Innovative Farmer*), was released to Nane Nane festival attendees this month. In a partnership between USAID-TAPP and Biovision Africa Trust, the monthly agriculture magazine, free of charge, is now available to smallholder farmers throughout the country. The magazine will serve as a vital resource in the propagation of new technologies that will increase yields, including soil fertility management, water management, pest and disease control, value addition practices, proper storage techniques, and how to produce new organic crops demanded from local and international markets. This information will improve food security in Tanzania by directly helping small scale farmers learn more sustainable, eco-friendly farming techniques.

Speaking during the launching ceremony, the Arusha Regional Commissioner pointed out that "with the shortage of agriculture extension officers in the country, the magazine has come at the right time and it will act as a major tool to inform and educate farmers." Mr. Shirima thanked the magazine partners for their full support in establishing the publication for the benefit of



Photo by Fintrac Inc

Northern Zone Production Manager, Manfred Bitala (left), shares proper vegetable plot production techniques with students during Nane Nane shows in Arusha.

Tanzania Agriculture Productivity Program

"Increased food security through enhanced productivity"

TAPP is a 5-year program implemented by Fintrac Inc. in conjunction with TAHA, the Tanzania Horticultural Association. It is designed to increase smallholder farmer incomes through enhanced productivity, crop diversification and improved market access.

Visit www.Tanzania-Agric.org for more information on upcoming activities and to receive copies of monthly bulletins and success stories.

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Tanzania farmers, over 85% of which are smallholder farmers who lack proper information, training, and access to agriculture practices.

ZANZIBAR MENTAL HEALTH HOSPITAL GARDENS

Patients at the Zanzibar Mental Health Hospital will soon benefit from having more nutritious meals and a therapeutic outlet. This month, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between USAID-TAPP and Barclays Bank to help fund an agricultural program at the Mental Health Hospital. The joint effort will provide for the construction of vegetable gardens onsite that will provide highly nutritious vegetables for the hospital kitchen and excellent occupational therapy for patients who will learn how to work the gardens and care for the plants. Additionally, a formal nursery will be established at the hospital for the provision of fruit tree seedlings. Under the agreement, Barclays Bank Tanzania will donate 4 million Tzs while USAID-TAPP will provide training and technical support to hospital staff and patients.



Photo by Fintrac Inc.

Festival attendees admire the newly released farmers' magazine, *Mkulima Mbunifu*, during the launching ceremony at Nane Nane.

SACK GARDENS TO BENEFIT VULNERABLE PEOPLE

USAID-TAPP conducted training on nutrition, food security and income generation to a total of 169 farmers (71 male and 98 female) in Tengeru, Arusha region in August. The preparation of sack gardens, which can be used to grow nutritious fruit and vegetables in places and for people with little to no access to land, was one of the topics included in this month's trainings. After seeing the sack gardens at a previous session, the Patandi Farmer Group from Tengeru requested USAID-TAPP's assistance in training their members how to construct the easy and affordable sack gardens. Patandi Farmer Group members are part of the Village Care Initiative – an organization dedicated to helping communities care for their orphans, widows, disabled, and people living with HIV/AIDS with the resources they have on hand - and have since requested that USAID-TAPP extend training workshops to other Village Care members.

LAND PREPERATION TRAINING HELPS FARMERS MAXIMIZE POTENTIAL

Two hundred and sixty-two farmers from four farmer groups throughout Meru and Arusha districts received training on the proper steps to prepare vegetable plots. Training topics included proper spacing, using starter solution, the benefits of planting in raised beds, how live barriers protect crops, how seedling trays improve germination rates and facilitate transfer plantings, the benefits of using resilient and productive hybrid seeds, weed removal and management, and the use of drench fertilizer. Demonstration plots of sweet pepper, carrots, tomato, zucchini, and broccoli showcasing these techniques will soon be constructed in the villages where the farmer groups are located.

TECHNOLOGY TOOLBOX



Photos by Fintrac Inc.

One of the technologies demonstrated by USAID-TAPP at the Nane Nane festival was drip irrigation. Drip irrigation is one of the easiest and most effective methods of watering crops. The costs of drip irrigation are usually offset in just one harvest cycle, as using this method of watering has the following benefits:

- Increased water conservation and efficiency as compared to gravity fed irrigation or overhead watering.
- Agrochemicals can be properly applied and monitored, which leads to better control and application of their use, and better control of pests and diseases.
- Even disbursement of water in the soil will result in less stressed, healthier plants.
- Watering only crop rows, not the entire field, helps to control weeds in the dry season.
- Flushing of soil nutrients and erosion is limited.
- The drudgery of manually watering crops on a daily basis is eliminated.
- A farmer can attend to other needs while he or she is irrigating.